

Foreword

Minnesota has changed in many ways since its statehood began in 1858, but one thing that has remained constant is the role of agriculture as a foundation of the state's economy. Ranking in the top ten among all states, Minnesota serves as a reliable source of many top-quality agricultural products for consumers around the globe. Even in urban areas of Minnesota, the presence of agriculture is felt through major food companies and internationally known brands based in our state.

Minnesota's agriculture industry supports many other industries as well, such as manufacturing, transportation, wholesale and retail trade, services, construction, banking, insurance, and real estate.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's mission is to enhance Minnesotans' quality of life by ensuring the integrity of our food supply, the health of our environment, and the strength of our agricultural economy. As part of that mission, the department helps produce the annual Minnesota Agricultural Statistics book. This book provides a wide range of high-quality information on trends in crop and livestock production, farm income and other data. This accurate information is vital for decision-makers across the agricultural sector.

I want to thank all the Minnesota farmers and agri-businesses who respond to the surveys by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). This useful book is possible only through their cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Gene Hugoson, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Agriculture



Agriculture continues to be a major part of Minnesota's economy. Rising input costs and declining prices have brought great challenges for our farmers to face. USDA-NASS provides the facts upon which decisions can be benchmarked in planning for the future. Without NASS reports, the future could only be developed on individuals' speculation, and not facts.

These changing times demand that accurate statistics on agriculture be maintained. USDA-NASS is the "Fact Finders" for agriculture, which helps producers and consumers with their decisions. This bulletin provides easy access to the 2008 estimates for Minnesota.

A special thanks to all of the farmers who participate in our surveys, which allows USDA-NASS to provide the facts on which to base sound decisions. Agriculture continues to be vital to this nation, and we thank all who are involved in meeting the world's demand for safe agriculture commodities. At USDA-NASS, we count agriculture because "Agriculture Counts".

If you would like additional information, e-mail us at nass-mn@nass.usda.gov or call us at 1-800-453-7502. You can also access our reports at www.nass.usda.gov/mn.

Sincerely,

Douglas A. Hartwig, Director
Minnesota Agricultural Statistics